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TURKEY and the BALKAN WAR

By

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Introductory Note.

For fifty years, Dr. Greene has been a missionary of the American Board in Turkey. Much of the time he has been at Constantinople, the capital. Clear-eyed, warm-hearted, with a love for men and a zeal for righteousness, he has watched the course of events intently, and has slowly formed his judgments and opinions on what was transpiring on both sides the Bosphorus. These conclusions, focussed by the present war, are in the following article clearly set forth in Dr. Greene's characteristic and delightful style. They will illuminate the situation for all who read them. And they will make yet more emphatic the opportunity which the missionary in Turkey now faces.

The attention of all subscribers to this quarterly is particularly asked to the notice on the third page of cover.

W. E. S.

Turkey and the Balkan War

By JOSEPH K. GREENE, D.D.,
of Constantinople.

The Mohammedans of the Turkish Empire belong to three distinct races.

First, in Arabia there are some five millions of Mohammedan Arabs who belong to many tribes, each tribe having its own sheikh or head. These Arab tribes have never been friendly to the Turks, and the Turkish government has ever found that the best way to govern the Arabs is to leave them to govern themselves.

Secondly, in Asia Minor there are some twelve millions of Mohammedan Turks. The Turks are Tartars, and came originally from the vast country of Central Asia, called Tartary or Turkestan. Some eleven hundred and fifty years ago the successors of Mohammed, called Caliphs, made Bagdad their seat of government, and, relying no longer on the Arab tribes for protection, hired Turks from the region east of the Caspian Sea to serve as their body-guard. Gradually these Turkish soldiers increased in numbers and power, and eventually made themselves masters of the great Saracenic Empire. For three centuries tribes of Turks and Mongols swept over Asia Minor in successive waves, some of their leaders

establishing great dominions, which endured for a while and then disappeared. About the middle of the thirteenth century, a Turkish tribe, under a leader called Ertogrul, made its way across Asia Minor to the town of Seoyud in Bithynia, one hundred and forty miles southeast of Constantinople. Here Ertogrul died, and left his possessions to his son Osman, the founder of the Ottoman dynasty, which has ruled Turkey, without a break in the succession, for six hundred years.

Thirdly, there are in European Turkey some two millions of Mohammedans, the great majority of whom are neither Arabs nor Turks, but are the descendants of the early Christian peoples found in the Balkan peninsula. At the time of the Turkish invasion of Europe, some five hundred and fifty years ago, many Albanians, Bosnians, Herzegovinians, Servians and Bulgarians — chiefly the great landowners and their serfs — declared themselves Mohammedans in order to save their lives and property and honor. By professing themselves Mohammedans, these landowners secured equal civil privileges and honors with the conquering Turks, and for centuries they lorded over their former fellow-Christians. Yet the outlook of these European Mohammedans has been towards Europe, not towards Asia, and in language, tradition and custom they are allied, not to Asiatics, but to Europeans. In recent years many of these Mohammedans have styled themselves Young Turks, and in 1908 they had a large part in bringing about the Turkish revolution.

The history of the Ottoman Turks may be divided into three periods.

The first period, of one hundred and fifty-four years, is the period of slow progress and growth.

The tribe of Osman, numbering at the beginning less than a thousand horsemen, gradually increased in power, and in 1299 captured Nicomedia, only sixty miles east of Constantinople. In 1326 the tribe of Osman, still further increased, captured Brousa, seventy miles south of Constantinople, and for thirty-nine years made that city their capital. In 1354, they crossed the Dardanelles into Europe, and in 1361 captured Adrianople, and for eighty-eight years made that city their capital. In 1389 the Christian peoples of the Balkan peninsula — the Servians, Bosnians, Herzegovinians, Albanians and Bulgarians — all under the leadership of Lazar, king of the Servians, gave battle to the Turks on the plain of Kossovo in Macedonia, and suffered a terrible defeat. In 1448, on the same plain of Kossovo, the allied Balkan peoples, under the great Hungarian leader Hunniades, again attacked the Turks and again were defeated. This was the last *united* attempt of the Balkan peoples to fight the Turks until the present year. Finally, the Turks, by gradual conquest in Asia Minor and in Europe, by growth from within, and by the addition of a large body of Christian renegades, at length in 1453 captured the gem of the Eastern world, the imperial city of Constantine. It is a striking fact, and one well worthy of remembrance, that so small was their beginning and so slow their progress, that the Ottoman Turks, even after the capture of Nicomedia in 1299, required one hundred and fifty-four years to advance and take Constantinople.

The second period, of one hundred and twenty-one years, — from 1453 to 1574 — is the period of greatest extension.

During this period the Ottoman armies, with few defeats, won many brilliant victories, and extended the limits of the empire until it embraced Asia Minor, Syria, Arabia, Egypt, Tripoli, Tunis, Algiers, the Crimea and the entire southern portion of Russia, all that was called European Turkey, the greater part of Hungary, Greece and the Grecian Islands. The zenith of Turkish power was reached during the reigns of Suleiman the Magnificent and of his son, Selim II, extending from 1520 to 1574. In September, 1529, Suleiman attacked Vienna with 250,000 men and 400 cannon, but, fortunately for Christendom, was obliged, after a few weeks, to raise the siege and retire.

What, now, were the causes of the wonderful success of the Turkish arms?

The first cause of Ottoman success is found in the fact that, for three hundred years after the capture of Nicomedia, the dynasty of Osman gave to the empire twelve great rulers, — men who, after the traditional conception of Mohammedan ruler, were absolute and irresponsible despots, but who, at the same time, were intrepid and skillful in war, wise in government, conciliatory towards conquered nations, and generally faithful to their treaty engagements. These rulers gave a considerable portion of the conquered land for the use of the common people, another portion to their principal followers, and another portion for the maintenance of

Mohammedan worship. Finally, the early Turkish rulers knew how to attract to their service talented men from among their Christian subjects. According to Von Hammer, from the capture of Constantinople in 1453 to about 1850, that is, in a period of about four hundred years, out of forty-eight leading men who were made Grand Viziers thirty-six were men of Christian extraction and twelve only were Turks. "It is," says a Venetian ambassador at the court of Selim II, in 1573, "it is in the highest degree remarkable that the wealth, the administration, the force, — in short — the body politic of the Ottoman empire rests upon, and is entrusted to, men born in the Christian faith."

The second cause of Ottoman success is found in the fact that, one hundred years before any similar body was formed in Europe, the Turks organized a disciplined military force, and, strange to say, this force came from a Christian stock. About the year 1330, by command of Sultan Orkhan, the brightest boys from Christian families were forcibly taken from their parents at an early age, were instructed in the tenets and practices of Islam, inured to the discipline of arms, and embodied in a military force, called in Turkish "Yeni Cheri," which Occidentals have changed to Janissary. The Turkish words meant New Troops. These troops, numbering, up to the time of the capture of Constantinople, some ten thousand men, were afterwards largely increased, and up to about 1680 were recruited from Christian families. "Thus," says Von Hammer, "the strength of Turkish despotism repaired itself in the heart-blood of Christen-

dom, and by means of this cunning engine of statecraft Christendom was compelled to tear herself to pieces by the hands of her own children." A disciplined force of cavalry, composed of Turks and called Sipahi, was also formed. These bodies of foot and horse formed the backbone of every Turkish army. They were filled with a fervid *esprit de corps,* animated by a single sentiment and capable of swift movement; they were also well fed and were rewarded with the spoil of their enemies and the gift of land. On the other hand, the European armies opposed to the Turks were composed of a motley multitude of serfs, of different nationalities, unaccustomed to united action and without thorough discipline. No wonder, then, that for a period of three hundred years in many a dreadful conflict the Ottoman armies were generally victorious, and the name of Janissary became the terror of European armies. No wonder that with the Saracens in Spain and the Turks in eastern Europe, all Christendom was alarmed lest the two horns of the Moslem crescent should unite and enclose the Christian nations of Europe in overwhelming ruin.

The third period of Ottoman rule, extending from 1574 to the present time, is the period of decline.

Worsted in several conflicts with Austria, attacked again and again by her inveterate foe the Russians, torn by fierce contests for the throne, and greatly weakened by oft-recurring revolts, the Turks have been obliged to relinquish Hungary, the Crimea, Bessarabia, Roumania, Servia, Bulgaria, Greece, a large part of eastern Asia Minor, Egypt, Tunis, Tripoli, Algiers and some of the

Ægean Islands. Since the year 1800 the Ottoman territory in Europe alone has been diminished to the extent of 169,000 square miles. The population of these European lands lost to Turkey is today 19,000,000, and since 1878 there has remained under the dominion of the Turks in Europe only 6,000,000 of people. Indeed, three separate times Turkey has been saved from still severer losses, if not from utter destruction, by the intervention of England.

What, now, were the causes of the Ottoman decline?

The first cause is found in the degeneracy of the Turkish rulers. Since 1574 there has been no great Turkish ruler, save Sultan Mahmoud the Second, who in 1826 destroyed the Janissaries. Formerly the heirs to the throne were carefully trained and were strengthened in capacity and character by devolving upon them high civil and military responsibilities. Nearly three centuries ago, however, the Sultans, owing to their fear of treachery and insurrection on the part of the royal princes, discontinued the old and the only practicable way to develop their sons, and for many generations the heirs to the throne, consigned to the companionship of eunuchs and slaves, enervated by luxury and indulgence, and unaccustomed to the duties of government, have ceased to lead their armies and to show the executive capacity of their ancestors.

The second cause of Ottoman decline is found in the fact that, from the beginning of the seventeenth century the Janissaries, transmitting their profession of arms from father to son, and no longer recruited from the

Christian subjects of the land, steadily deteriorated as a fighting force, and by their revolts and crimes became a menace to both the rulers and people.

The third reason of the Ottoman decline is found in the fact that the very structure of the Ottoman state has robbed it of the willing support of its non-Mussulman subjects — subjects who, until the independence of Greece and the erection of the Christian principalities in European Turkey, numbered about one-half of the entire population. The Koran is the fundamental law of every Mohammedan state, and, according to the Koran, non-Mussulman subjects have no share in the administration of government or of justice, and in the practical enjoyment of civil rights there is no equality between Mohammedans and non-Mohammedans. The Turks have looked down upon their Christian subjects with arrogance and disdain, and have subjected them to many forms of hardships and oppression. Thus they have alienated one-half of the population. To gain the confidence of their Christian subjects and secure their hearty allegiance, the Turks had need to change the very basis of the Ottoman government; had need, in short, to separate the Ottoman state from the Mohammedan religious body. To change the very basis of the Mohammedan state, however, and to bring it into conformity with the modern view of equality of civil rights has hitherto been found to be impossible. The Mohammedan religion when first accepted by the barbarous Turks gave them some new and grand ideas, and inspired them with the zeal of fanatics; but, from the very beginning, in its formal worship, in

its pernicious customs, in its defective morality, in its arrogance and intellectual stagnation it planted the seeds of decline and decay. The result has been seen in a state without progress, in a home where woman has been degraded, in a society where religion and morality have been divorced, and in a people which, by reason of polygamy, concubinage, slavery and crimes against nature has been steadily diminishing in numbers and strength.

In the past century attempts at reform were made by Sultan Selim III, Sultan Mahmoud II and Sultan Medjid, but the imperial edicts promising equal civil rights and religious liberty failed to secure the support of the great body of Mohammedans, and were never heartily enforced. The Great Powers of Europe, likewise, aiming to ameliorate the conditions of the Christian subjects of Turkey, caused to be inserted in the Treaty of Paris of 1856, and in the Treaty of Berlin of 1878, articles which recognized and commended the reforms promised by the Turkish rulers, but the execution of these reforms was left to the Turks themselves, and the European powers have never made a united and hearty effort to secure reform in Turkey. In fact, the *ineffective* meddling in Turkish affairs on the part of Europe has done more *harm* than good.

Such was the state of affairs when in July, 1908, the Turkish revolution, inaugurated by the young Turks, surprised and delighted the world. There is reason to believe that at least twenty per cent of the Turkish people really meant to revolutionize the Turkish government. The young Turks started out with the noble motto of

liberty, justice, equality and fraternity,—words which they never learned from Mohammedanism, but from Christian Europe and America. They deposed the cruel tyrant Hamid, organized a parliament of two hundred and eighty deputies, including quite a number of Christians, all chosen by vote of the people, recalled forty thousand exiles, dismissed thirty thousand spies, punished by death many Turks guilty of reaction and massacre in Constantinople and Adana in 1909, embodied Christian soldiers in the army, granted freedom of worship in private houses, freedom of public assembly, freedom of travel, freedom of the press and freedom of education for Moslem students. In short, the Young Turks attempted to secure, not only the overthrow of despotic rule, but also the equal civil rights of all Ottoman subjects. This attempt received official sanction from the Sheikh-ul-Islam, who, by a circular letter addressed to all the religious leaders of the Turks, declared that, according to a correct interpretation of the Koran, the sacred law of Islam accords with the demands of a constitutional government and of modern civilization. This declaration was not in harmony with Mohammedan tradition or practice, but was most significant. The leading Turkish newspapers of Constantinople have also labored to convince the Moslem population that the new movement harmonized with the teachings of the Koran. The newspaper organ of the Young Turk party, called the *Tanin,* published not long ago this remarkable declaration: "We cannot survive as a nation without the sympathy of Europe, and we cannot get the sympathy

of Europe unless we conform to European forms of government."

Sad to say, the new movement, so hopefully begun, failed to develop really wise, capable, unselfish and patriotic leaders, and the Young Turks, in order to conciliate the old and traditionary Moslem sentiment and so strengthen their position, tried to merge all the different peoples of Turkey in one type of Osmanli subject, without due regard to differences of race and language and religion, and so alienated their most earnest supporters. Then, again, the attention of the new government was very largely occupied with foreign questions — with the action of Austria in annexing the two Turkish provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, of Bulgaria in declaring herself independent, of the Greeks in Crete in demanding union with Greece, and of Italy in her seizure of Tripoli. Thus, the Young Turks, intent on carrying out Utopian projects at home and preoccupied with external questions, failed to conciliate the people by internal reforms, especially in Macedonia. The Great Powers who were parties to the Treaty of Berlin specially stipulated for reforms in that province, but, strange to say, as usual left the execution of these reforms to the Ottoman government, and the Turks, both under Sultan Hamid and under the new government, through delay lost the golden opportunity to settle the burning question of Macedonia. In this province some 600,000 Bulgarians, 400,000 Servians, 400,000 Mohammedans and 300,000 Greeks have for many years been engaged in bitter racial and religious conflicts, and revolutionary bands,

made up of Bulgarians, Greeks and Servians, have in turn harassed, robbed and murdered the people. An autonomous administration, under a wise and firm Christian governor, with a body of native police under able European officers, and with the administration of equal justice for all, would have satisfied the people and quieted the province.

Profiting from this situation the four Balkan states, forming a secret alliance, declared war against Turkey.

Of these states, Montenegro, though several times overrun by the Turks, has always recovered her freedom; Greece has been independent for eighty years, and Servia and Bulgaria have been entirely free from Turkish control since the Treaty of Berlin of 1878. Hence, in recent years, these states have had no special complaint against the Turks. What, then, were the causes of the war? The *motives* of the allied states were *three.*

First, the memory of ancient wrongs has ever rankled in the breast of every Greek and Slav. The cruelty of the early subjugation of these races, the oppression of centuries, and the injustice and arrogance of the Turks have provoked undying hatred. Under such circumstances revenge is sweet. Hence, the peoples and the governments of the Balkan states, from the time they achieved their self-government, have been sharpening their swords and preparing for the opportunity of avenging themselves on their ancient foe.

Secondly, the peoples of the Balkan states have been moved by sympathy for their co-religionists still under the Turkish rule. The kings of all the allied states set

forth in their declaration of war that their object was to deliver their fellow countrymen from oppression. And this was true, though not the whole truth. Indeed, had the Bulgarians, Servians and Greeks of Macedonia come to an agreement among themselves, they might very greatly have ameliorated their sad condition. It is difficult to apportion the responsibility, but it is clear that of all parties concerned the ruling Turks were the most to blame. Authority was in their hands and theirs was the chief responsibility.

Thirdly, the allied states have had a passionate desire to extend their borders. In mediæval times Bulgarians and Servians ruled, in turn, over almost all the Balkan peninsula. These people cherish the memory of their ancient power and glory, and they, together with the Montenegrins and Greeks, for racial and commercial interests naturally desire to extend their bounds. In short, in the progress of the war, all motives have combined in the purpose to drive the Turk from Europe and to divide the Balkan lands among the Balkan states.

The war has been short and decisive, and, up to date, the success of the allied armies has surprised the world. What, then, are the causes of this success?

Clearly the success is not due to difference of race, for in fighting qualities the allies and the Turks are a very good match. The allies, however, as soon as freedom gave them the opportunity, entered on an era of progress, while the Turks, fettered by their religion, have been outstripped in the race.

The Turks, though forewarned, were not expecting either the joint action of the Balkan states or their speedy decision to fight. Turkey has ever profited by divisions among her enemies, and could not believe that hereditary enemies like the Bulgar and the Greek could ever unite. Again, the Turkish army is conscripted for the most part from the peasants of Asia Minor, and, owing to distance and lack of railway facilities, is not easily mobilized. Moreover, the Young Turks, coming into power by the sword, and relying on the sword for the maintenance of their power, re-organized the army by putting younger officers whom they trusted in place of older officers whom they distrusted, and the supply of younger officers was all too small. This lack of capable and experienced officers has proved a very serious defect, for the Turkish peasant soldiers having no initiative are ever dependent on leadership. Then, again, in their hasty mobilization, the commissariat arrangements of the Turks were utterly inadequate. Hence, time and again, the Turkish soldiers were left hungry, and many men are reported to have died from exhaustion.

Whatever explanation may be given, however, for the Turkish defeats, the fact remains that the Turks have been beaten on all sides. Montenegro declared war on October 8, and Bulgaria, Servia and Greece on October 17. The allied states entered on the war with some 550,000 men and 1,700 guns, and Turkey with about the same number of men and 1,000 guns. The Balkan states had a good understanding among themselves, and wisely allowed each state to send its army into the territory

which it wished permanently to hold, though in Thrace Servia gave strong support to Bulgaria, and in Macedonia, Servians and Bulgarians fought together in several places. The rapidity of movement and the success of the allied armies have been marvelous. In great and bloody battles they have been uniformly victorious, and have suffered no serious reverse.

The Bulgarians were under the supreme command of General Savoff, a native Bulgarian, educated in the military schools of Belgium and Prussia. Without any considerable experience in war, he has shown ability to handle an army of 235,000 men, and has developed great strategical skill. He led the main Bulgarian army against the main Turkish army in Thrace. Leaving a large force to envelop the city of Adrianople and to reduce the fortress by gradual approach, with great secrecy he moved the bulk of his army to the east of Adrianople, defeated and routed the Turks in the great battles of Kirk Kilisse and Lule Bourgas, occupied the line of railway between Adrianople and Constantinople, thereby preventing the Turks from sending reinforcements either to Adrianople or Macedonia, and marched his troops to the line of defence of Constantinople itself. This great achievement was accomplished in a month's time. It is true that Adrianople still holds out, and that the Chatalja line of fortifications covering Constantinople brought the Bulgarians to a stand, but the whole province of Thrace, beyond the fortifications of Constantinople and exclusive of the line of the Dardanelles, is substantially in possession of the Bulgarians, and the Turks, still able to fight val-

iantly behind the fortifications of Constantinople, but not able to take the offensive, in the early part of December secured an armistice and entered on negotiations for peace.

The main Servian army, led by the Crown Prince of Servia, also won decisive victories, took possession of that part of Old Servia which remained in Turkish hands, had a triumphant entry into Uskub, the ancient capital of Servia, and captured Monastir, the Turkish capital of Macedonia. Thus the Servians have avenged the two great defeats of the Balkan allies on the plain of Kossovo.

The Greek army, under the command of the Greek Crown Prince, occupied Salonica, the chief seaport and commercial capital of Macedonia, and after long and severe fighting, captured Janina, the capital of Epirus.

The Montenegrins under their Crown Prince enlarged their territory by the capture of several important places, and now have as their main object to secure possession of the strong fortress and city of Scutari, which they wish to hold as the defense of their southern border.

The four Balkan states won these victories in the face of large Turkish armies. All this they were enabled to do by rapid movement, by the secrecy of their operations, by the superior strategy of their commanders, by the bravery and endurance of their soldiers, by the excellence of their organization and discipline, by successful arrangements for feeding their armies and by their superior artillery. In all these respects these "ex-slaves" of the Turks evinced their superiority, gave their former masters such a beating as they had never had before, and showed what

freedom can do. In all previous wars, the Turks have fought against great European armies, but the humiliation which they have now been called upon to endure is that they have been beaten by those whom they formerly despised as "rayahs" or slaves.

Alas, the price of these victories, paid by the Balkan states, is 100,000 men killed and wounded, the tears of countless widows and orphans and the loss of great material wealth. The losses and miseries of the defeated Turks have been very much more. It was estimated that up to the time of the armistice, the Turks had lost, from all sources, 200,000 men. There is, however, this difference between the two parties that, while the Balkan peoples will in due time recover from their losses, the losses of the Turks are, for the most part, final and irretrievable. Five hundred years ago, the nomad Turks, following their armies, moved into Europe with their buffaloes and creaking carts, and it is reported that multitudes of Turkish peasants from the villages of Thrace have within the last few weeks, been passing through Constantinople on their way to Asia Minor in practically the same manner as their ancestors came into Europe. It is said that the wheels of their long narrow carts have spokes in them now, whereas formerly the wheels were of solid planks. This means, as a Constantinople friend observes, that five centuries of life on European soil has not affected, to any perceptible degree, the scale of civilization of these Asiatics. "They have been in Europe, but not of it," and, with the descent of the Bulgarian armies upon Thrace, they

picked up their earthly belongings and moved back to Asia. Their unchanged condition is due to the character of their religion, and they have gone back to Asia, not because they were driven out by the Balkan armies, but because they did not wish to live under any but Moslem rule. It was reported from Constantinople under date of the 27th of November last, that 107,000 of these poor people had already passed through Constantinople, and that 100,000 more were on the way. It is pleasant to learn that the European and American residents in Constantinople have shown great sympathy for these poor people, and have labored day and night to relieve their sufferings.

It is fitting to ask, Is the Eastern Question, so far as relates to the Balkan peninsula, to be finally settled by this war? We answer that, so long as selfish national interests control the actions of men, there is no finality in history. Alas that the negotiations following the armistice failed and that hostilities were resumed. Let us hope, however, that the Turks may soon accept the inevitable, and that all parties may agree to such peace as will last at least for a generation. To secure such a peace, however, some things seem to be indispensable.

First, the Turks numbering 600,000 in Constantinople, that is to say one-half of the population, must, at least for the present, be left in possession of that city and of a small section of Thrace. The rules and regulations which shall govern the navigation of the Bosphorus and of the Dardanelles must be settled by the Great Powers.

Secondly, an end must be put to the dominion of the Turk in the Balkan peninsula. The Turks have had a fair trial in Europe for five hundred and fifty years, and have shown that, until reformed on a European and Christian model, they are incapable of ruling with justice and impartiality over a non-Moslem people. The Turks were a virile and capable race, with many praiseworthy qualities, on a par with the Slavs and other European people. Their lands in Asia and Europe were unsurpassed. They have been under the absolute influence of Islam for a thousand years, and Islam has proved a *failure,* not only in a religious, but also in a political and material sense. This is simply the lesson of history.

Thirdly, Austria should give up her ambition to secure railway communication through Macedonia and the possession of the seaport of Salonica.

Fourthly, Servia should be allowed a commercial outlet on the Adriatic, and there should be conceded to her, without the exercise of sovereignty in Albania, the right to construct a railway through the northern part of that province.

Fifthly, Albania should be recognized as a self-governing state, either under a native Albanian or a European prince. The Albanians, whether Mohammedans or Orthodox Greek or Catholic in religion, are substantially one in race, language and tradition, and they all desire to form a free and independent government.

Sixthly, in order to maintain her material existence and secure respect among the enlarged Balkan states, Greece

should be allowed an extension of territory to the southern boundary of Macedonia and Albania, including the ancient province of Epirus and the Island of Crete.

Seventhly, Bulgaria, Servia and Montenegro have justified their claim to divide among themselves, exclusive of Albania, that part of the Balkan peninsula which, according to the Treaty of Berlin, was left under Turkish rule in 1878. Thus the territory of the Balkan States will be very considerably increased, and each of these states will have at least one seaport, either on the Adriatic or Ægean Sea.

The most difficult question for solution is that of Macedonia. Greece and the Balkan states desire to divide the entire province among themselves, but it is doubtful whether they can agree on a solution at once satisfactory to themselves and to the diverse peoples of the province. The happy solution would be to make Macedonia an autonomous state under a European governor, either with dimensions as at present or somewhat reduced, with Salonica as the capital.

The war will greatly change the map of what has hitherto been known as European Turkey, but there will be left to the Turks the rich and beautiful land of Asia Minor, a land a thousand miles long and four hundred miles wide, with Constantinople as their capital. Humiliated by the loss of all their European provinces, deprived of a large part of their resources, with many of their hopes arising from the adoption of a constitutional form of government blasted, what will probably be the influence of these momentous changes on

the Turks themselves? We may hope, I believe, that the result will be good. A Turkish proverb says: "The hand you cannot cut off, kiss and press to your forehead." This means submission to *kismet,* to fate, to the will of God. The chastisement has been severe, but the Turks know well that it has been deserved. On November 13, 1912, the Turkish papers of Constantinople published an open letter written by Prince Sabah-ed-din, a grandson of Sultan Hamid and an heir to the throne, in which, addressing the present Sultan, he says: — "Sire, however bitter this truth may be, we must confess to ourselves that our greatest enemy is not Italy, nor Europe, nor the Balkans, but *ourselves.* The seat of the evil is in our own private life." That such a bold utterance should have been addressed to the Sultan, and that it should have been published in the Turkish newspapers indicates nothing less than revolution in Turkish sentiment. There are great searchings of heart at the present time, and many Turks are penetrated with the thought that, whatever in the past may have been the traditionary interpretation of their sacred law, the Koran, they must now, in their relation to their Christian fellow-subjects and to Europeans, conform to the usages of Europe. The Turks know that, handicapped by their environment, they are being outstripped by the Christian peoples, and that the only alternative is a change in their manner of ruling or defeat.

According to the statement of the Turkish newspapers, on January 15, 1913, the present Sultan, in an interview with the editor of the Turkish paper the *Sabah,* said: "In

the midst of the present anguish there is no one whose heart is more pained than mine. But I compel myself to stifle my griefs so as to fulfil the duties God has entrusted to me. I am a constitutional sovereign. As soon as the present difficulties disappear, our first work will be to convene parliament. Neither in my imperial family nor among my people is there an enemy of the constitution. Absolutism, which degenerates whether or no to despotism, cannot at any time, and especially in the age in which we live, ensure the meeting of the needs of a nation or compass its success."

A committee of the leading members of the last parliament, just before its dissolution a few months ago, issued a new party program, composed of ten articles. Article 6 says: "The party shall aim at the development, in the empire, of *Occidental* civilization and progress, while respecting public morals and national and religious usages." Article 7 says: "The historical traditions of the empire shall be followed within the limits of the constitution." This last article means that historical traditions, that is to say, Mohammedan interpretations of the Koran, are *not* to be followed when they conflict with equal rights and equal justice, enjoined in the constitution. In short, many signs indicate that the leading Turks have come clearly to apprehend that genuine reform in civil affairs is a matter of life and death. Hence, both missionaries and other liberal-minded foreigners residing in Turkey say, "GIVE THE TURKS ANOTHER CHANCE." In Asia Minor they number some twelve millions, including Kourds and Circassians, and there

they feel at home. Within narrower bounds and freed largely from the pressure of external questions, they will seek to do justice, we believe, to the four millions of Greek, Armenian, Syrian and Protestant Christians dwelling among them. The rising generation of all the races is incessant in its demands for new railroads and civil reform and education. The fifty high schools and ten colleges in Asia Minor and Syria and Egypt, under American management, will soon be embarrassed by the multitude of students, male and female, Moslem as well as Christian, clamoring for admittance.

But, will there be no danger when several hundred thousand Turkish soldiers at the close of the war shall return to Asia Minor? I think not. The poor peasant soldiers will be only too glad to get back to their homes and farms. They will come back sobered by defeat, and with new ideas respecting those Balkan Christians whom they have been accustomed to despise as *ghaiours*. Thousands of Turks, too, who have been held as prisoners of war will return to tell that they were kindly treated, and sick and wounded soldiers will tell how they were cared for by skillful Christian doctors and attended by angels in the form of Christian nurses. In short, the ploughshare of the Lord has been driven deep through Turkish soil, and a powerful impression of their sins and defects has been made upon the Turkish mind. It is a mighty fact that the Christian "ex-slaves" of yesterday have prevailed over the armies of Islam. Many Turks will conclude that in Asia Minor they have their last chance, and will be led to support the constitutional regime and

needed reform. Their uppermost thought will be that they *must* mend their ways, or they will speedily be driven from Constantinople itself.

Hence, the missionaries of the American Board in Turkey, to whom in the providence of God is committed, to a very large extent, the evangelistic work in that land, have, opening before them, a great door of opportunity. What agencies have they in hand for improving this opportunity? They have great literary, educational, medical and charitable agencies in hand, with the support of sixty thousand native Protestants witnessing for Christ. They have their base of supply in men and means in America, especially in the Congregational churches which sustain the American Board. Oh, would that American Christians might apprehend the great providential call of God to them to carry the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Turks, and would that they might address themselves to this task with zeal and faith and patience, trusting in Him who said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

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